

SHERROD BROWN
OHIO

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY
BANKING, HOUSING,
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
FINANCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

December 20, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
300 7th St SW
Washington, DC 20024

Admiral Linda Fagan
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard
1790 Ash St. SE
Washington, DC 20032

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Admiral Fagan:

I urge you to reconsider your decision to close the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Station Ashtabula or downsize the Fairport Station. Maintaining a USCG presence in Ashtabula, particularly during peak season, is essential for ensuring security and emergency preparedness across the south coast of Lake Erie. In addition to threatening the safety of the region, closing this essential operation would come at the detriment of the greater community.

Ohioans have long relied on Lake Erie as a driver of economic growth that supports both commerce and recreation. Lake-related activities contribute over 150,000 jobs to the state and have an economic benefit of \$3.5 billion annually. The community's ability to safely enjoy Lake Erie hinges upon the security and emergency preparedness provided by the Coast Guard, including USCG Ashtabula Station. USCG only operates this station from May to September each year and any reduction of that staffing will leave the region vulnerable during times of peak usage.

The Maritime Security Operations mission is to detect, deter, prevent, and disrupt terrorist attacks, and other criminal acts in the U.S. maritime domain, and that includes the execution of antiterrorism, response, recovery operations, and the prevention of smuggling illicit narcotics into the U.S. along our Northern Border and the Great Lakes. I oppose the efforts to close the Coast Guard Station in the Ashtabula Harbor and any downsizing proposals of Fairport Station.

The opening of the Fairport Station in 1876 welcomed support for operations on the banks of Lake Erie. Since 1893, the U.S. Coast Guard has had a presence in Ashtabula. The Coast Guard's continuous presence in Ashtabula supports public safety in the region, ensures the integrity of our water-based border, and supports commerce and trade. The operation also helps

to support two deep water ports in the county. We must ensure safe passage for goods, as well as the safety of recreational users, by maintaining a USCG presence.

Investments in Lake Erie and the other Great Lakes spur economic growth in Ohio and across the region. As a member of the Great Lakes Task Force, I am actively seeking ways to encourage the continued revitalization of Lake Erie and ensure the region has the resources necessary to support the Lake activities, including the growing tourism industry. I know that the continued growth of Ohio requires that we maintain and invest resources in this irreplaceable watershed and habitat.

I urge you to reconsider your decision to close the USCG Station Ashtabula and take the time to engage local stakeholders, including Ashtabula City Council, prior to making any additional changes to regional operations. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator